

Clarence Birdseye Encyclopedia Article

Clarence Birdseye

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Clarence Birdseye

1886-1956

American businessman and inventor whose name became synonymous with frozen foods. Clarence Birdseye was born in Brooklyn, New York. He was a naturalist from early on, but turned to business when he found that he lacked the funds to finish his studies at Amherst College. He left school to become a fur trader in Labrador in 1912 and again in 1916. While there, he noticed that the locals froze food in order to sustain themselves during the long harsh winter. When Birdseye returned to the United States, he formed General Seafoods Company, where he began selling his own brand of frozen foods. His process of quick freezing preserved the flavor of the food. Birdseye's frozen fish, fruits, and vegetables quickly became a huge success with the public. From 1930-34 he served as president of Birds Eye Frosted Foods, and from 1935-38 he ran Birdseye Electric Company. Birdseye held nearly 300 patents on inventions ranging from heat lamps, to a harpoon gun.